

Arcanum-Butler Local Schools



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Dear Parents/Guardians:

In December 2016, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 410 that included rules and procedures related to **Excessive Absenteeism** that further emphasize the importance of school attendance. This letter serves to notify you of major aspects of the law and changes for students of Arcanum-Butler Local Schools.

- ☐ 'Chronic truant' was removed from law and replaced with 'habitual truant'
- ☐ 'Habitual truant' was changed from number of missed *days* to *hours* and defined as a student who is:
 - ☐ Absent 30 or more consecutive hours without a legitimate excuse
 - ☐ Absent 42 or more hours in a month without a legitimate excuse
 - ☐ Absent 72 or more hours in a year without a legitimate excuse
 - ☐ *Note: legitimate excuse = excused absence
- ☐ It is important to understand that tardies, early dismissals, parent excused absences, and medical excused absences also count towards absence hours.
- ☐ Districts must notify parents with students who have 'excessive absences' with or without a legitimate excuse (both excused and unexcused absences)
 - ☐ letters must be sent home if students miss 38 hours in a month or 65 hours in a year *with or without* legitimate excuse
- ☐ Students cannot be suspended or expelled for being truant
- ☐ Districts with a chronic absenteeism rate of 5 percent or greater must establish absence intervention teams for students who meet either the habitual truant or excessive absent definition. (*Arcanum's rate is 5.2%*).

Please take time to review the district's attendance policy provided. For full details of the House Bill 410 requirements, definitions and answers to frequently asked questions, visit the Ohio Department of Education website and enter HB 410 in the search function.

There are many legitimate reasons that students miss school, however, regular attendance is a key factor in students' academic success. We look forward to working together to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and grow at Arcanum-Butler Local Schools.

Respectfully,

John N. Stephens
Superintendent

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Arcanum-Butler Local Schools Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is an important ingredient in students' academic success. In December 2016, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 410 to encourage and support a preventative approach to excessive absences and truancy. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, several changes take effect.

- *Chronic Truant* changed to *Habitual Truant*
- Habitual Truant referred to in number of *consecutive hours* instead of *consecutive days*
- Schools cannot suspend or expel students for missing too much school.

EXCUSED (LEGITIMATE) ABSENCES

Regular attendance by all students is very important. In some cases, irregular attendance is the major reason for poor school work; therefore, all students are urged to make appointments, do personal errands, etc., outside of school hours. In the cases of absences relating to the following situations, a student has the same amount of days to make up his/her work as the amount of days he/she is absent.

- Personal Illness
- Doctor's Appointment
- Illness in the Family
- Death of Immediate Relative - includes parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.
- Observance of Religious Holidays
- Workdays - For students over 14 years of age only, an excused absence is granted provided that the work done shall be for the student's parents.
- College Visitations and Applying for Jobs – HS students may be excused 2 days for the purpose of college visitations or to take the armed forces exams.

***Trips and Vacations** - Every attempt should be made by students and parents to schedule trips and vacations during periods of time when school is not in session. If it is impossible for the trip to be taken at any other period of time than during the period in which school is in session, the parent is to contact the school a minimum of three days prior to the trip. No student is permitted to be excused for more than 7 days for trips or vacations during the school year, and work must be completed and turned in to the teacher within the number of days missed upon returning to school. However, the last five days of the school year will be considered unexcused with no make-up privileges (at the high school level, this applies to the last five days of each semester).

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any student who is absent from school for all or part of the day without a legitimate excuse shall be considered truant and the student and his/her parents shall be subject to the truancy laws of the state. The following is a partial list of reasons for absences which will be considered as unexcused: shopping, oversleeping, babysitting, missed the bus, car trouble, leaving grounds without permission, working-- other than for parents, absence from school with no excuse offered, the last 5 days of the school year (high school, last five days of each semester)

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

Parents are to notify the school before school begins on the day of absence, to explain the nature of their child's absence from school. You can report your child's absence by calling the attendance

secretary at 692-5174 option #2 to record the information, or upon returning from an absence, the student may bring a written excuse, signed by the parent, giving the reason for the absence. *For doctor or dentist appointments that must occur during the school day, a note from the doctor must be provided to the school's attendance office when the student returns in order for it to be considered excused.* It is the student's responsibility to contact his/her respective teachers for make-up work and to see that tests or incompletes are corrected as soon as possible.

TARDINESS

Students tardy to school for the first period in the morning will report to the attendance secretary for an excuse. Teachers will handle tardiness to class. Students tardy to class from another class should get their excuse from the preceding teacher. It is important to understand that tardies, early dismissals, parent excused absences, and medical excused absences also count towards absence hours.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCE NOTICE

As required by law, the district attendance officer provides notice to the parent of a student who is absent with or without excuse for 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in a school year within 7 days after the date of the absence triggering the notice. At the time of notice, the District will provide suggestions for improving attendance and may request an absence intervention team meeting.

TRUANCY

As defined by law, a "habitual truant" is any child of compulsory school age who is absent without a legitimate excuse for 30 consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one month, or 72 or more hours in a school year. The parent is required to have the child attend school immediately after notification. The school's attendance officer will notify the child's parent, guardian or custodian of the child's absences after the date absent that triggered the notice requirement.

ABSENCE INTERVENTION PLAN

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, when a student's absences surpass the threshold for a habitual truant, the principal or the Superintendent assigns the student to an absence intervention team within 10 days of the triggering event. The absence intervention plan must be developed within seven school days of the triggering event and is based on the needs of the individual student. The team must include a representative from the student's school or District, a representative from the student's school or District who knows the student and the student's parent or their designee, and also may include a school psychologist, counselor, social worker or representative of an agency designed to assist students and their families in reducing absences. During the seven days while developing the team, the Superintendent or principal makes at least three meaningful, good faith attempts to secure participation of the student's parent. If the student's parent is unresponsive the District investigates whether the failure to respond triggers mandatory reporting to the appropriate children's services agency and instructs the absence team to develop the intervention plan without the parent.

Within 14 school days after a student is assigned to a team, the team develops a student specific intervention plan to work to reduce or eliminate further absences. The plan includes, at minimum, a statement that the District will file a complaint in juvenile court not later than 61 days after the date the plan is implemented if the student refuses to participate or fails to make satisfactory progress. The District makes reasonable efforts to provide the student's parent with written notice of the plan within seven days of development.

If the student becomes habitually truant within 21 school days prior to the last day of instruction of a school year, the District may either assign a school official to work with the student's parent to develop an intervention plan during the summer and implement the plan no later than seven days prior to the first day of instruction of the next school year, or reconvene the absence intervention process on the first day of instruction of the next school year.

FILING A COMPLAINT WITH JUVENILE COURT

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the attendance officer must file a complaint against the student in juvenile court on the 61st day after implementation of the absence intervention plan when:

1. the student's absences have surpassed the threshold for a habitual truant;
2. the District has made meaningful attempts to re-engage the student through the absence intervention plan, other intervention strategies and any offered alternatives to adjudication and
3. the student has refused to participate in or failed to make satisfactory progress on the plan or any offered intervention strategies or alternatives to adjudication as determined by the absence intervention team.

If the 61st day after intervention falls on a day during the summer months, the District may extend the implementation of the plan and delay the filing of the complaint for an additional 30 days after the first day of instruction of the next school year.

Unless the absence intervention team determines the student has made substantial progress on their absence intervention plan, the attendance officer must file a complaint against the student in juvenile court if the student is absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours or 42 or more hours during a school month at any time during the implementation phase of the intervention plan or other intervention strategy.

	Consecutive hours	Hours per school month	Hours per school year
Habitual Truancy	30 without legitimate excuse	42 without legitimate excuse	72 without legitimate excuse
Excessive Absences		38 with or without legitimate excuse	65 with or without legitimate excuse
Chronic Absenteeism			10% or 92 with or without legitimate excuse